

The Commoner.

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The World Dodges

When the New York World proposed "a new democratic party" in which "the Bryan socialism" should be abandoned, The Commoner asked: "What is the thing the New York World calls 'Bryan socialism' from which, in the World's opinion, the party has been emancipated?" The Commoner asked the World to point out the changes the reorganizers would make in the democratic national platform for 1908.

Would the World repeal the plank promising to restore the lower house of congress to its representative capacity, the declaration in support of the state governments in all their rights, the plank denouncing trust shelter in the tariff, the demand for physical valuation of railroads, the protest against the over-issue of stocks and bonds, the declaration in favor of the popular election of senators, the advocacy of the income tax, the objection to ship subsidy, or the declaration that "a private monopoly is indefensible and intolerable?"

Pretending to reply, the World names government ownership of railroads, prohibition, and some other things that were not in the platform. It is not willing, however, to use the platform of 1908 as the calcium light in which the purpose of the men behind the World's reorganization plan may be read.

It now says: "When the World says that the democratic party is emancipated from Bryan socialism, we mean especially that in dealing with corporation abuses Anglo-Saxon remedies are to be substituted for socialistic remedies." The World explains: "If we were seeking an illustration we should say that the Bryan-Roosevelt schemes of trust license are inherently socialistic, while the true democratic theory of dealing with all offenses against society is embodied in three words—'Guilt is personal.'"

There is no similarity whatever between the Bryan and the Roosevelt plans of "trust license." Mr. Roosevelt wants corporations incorporated under federal authority,—a centralization scheme against which Mr. Bryan has protested as resolutely as against any other undemocratic method. Mr. Bryan's so-called "trust license" plan provides merely for the shutting up of trusts in the state of their origin and requires them, before they may do an interstate business, to obtain a certificate from federal authorities that they have not violated the anti-trust law.

The proposition that "Guilt is personal," is one which Mr. Bryan has favored ever since he has been in public life. In every speech he has made with respect to trusts he has pleaded for the enforcement of the criminal clause of the Sherman anti-trust law. From its initial number The Commoner has made that same plea, and it is absurd for the World, a newspaper which is now engaged, just as it was engaged in 1904, in an effort to Morganize the democratic party, to pretend that it has dis-

covered in the "Guilt is personal" proposition a new and astounding remedy.

The World has misrepresented Mr. Bryan for so many years that some of its editorial writers may now really believe their own mis-statements. When the World says that it desires "Anglo-Saxon" remedies rather than "socialistic remedies" for corporation abuses, it means—just as it meant in 1904 when it stood sponsor for the reorganization under which the democratic party went to ignominious defeat—remedies applied by a party organized by the representatives of the special interests.

The World concludes: "Even if Mr. Bryan were the soundest and sanest of political economists—which he is not—he is so politically discredited that the hope of the party can lie only in new leadership."

Granting all that the World may say of Mr. Bryan, how does it happen that in its search for "new leadership" the World invariably lands in the same neighborhood where the representatives of trusts and other special interests most do congregate? How does it happen that whenever the World searches for a democratic candidate it cannot be persuaded to fasten its gaze upon any of the many capable democrats whose record would justify the hope that they would stand against the encroachment of special interests? How does it happen that the World's candidate is usually the preferred candidate of the special interests?

ANOTHER WALL STREET SCHEME

The press dispatches report that Senator Aldrich has decided to "force" his currency reform measure through congress at this session. Mr. Aldrich's plan includes the central bank and he compliments the democratic party, when by attempting to force it through the "job" session after the election and before the republican party goes out, he confesses that the democratic congress soon to meet would not favor the central bank.

The Commoner has, for a long time, been warning its readers against the central bank. It is a scheme concocted by the big financiers of Wall Street to secure control of all the business of the country as well as of the country's finances. It is to be hoped that the democratic party will present a united front against it and that there will be enough progressive republicans to ensure its defeat. As a matter of precaution, however, every Commoner reader and every one whom a Commoner reader can influence, ought to write to his congressman urging the defeat of the central bank scheme. There is no time to lose—write now.

MAKING A GOOD START

Congressman-elect Martin W. Littleton of the Oyster Bay district, has severed his connection with his law firm, and announces that in his practice he will not accept business from corporations which could possibly be affected by laws that may be enacted during his term in congress.

Good for Mr. Littleton! He is starting out right. No official can afford to put himself in the position of serving two masters. The legislator should have as high a sense of honor as a judge. No judge would permit himself to try a case in which he has a pecuniary interest and a legislator should be as unwilling to permit a question to be raised as to his disinterestedness. Mr. Littleton has set an example which should be universally followed.

GOVERNOR WILSON'S OPPORTUNITY

Governor Wilson of New Jersey has an opportunity to show his position on an important question—a test question, too, when he sends his first message to the legislature.

The income tax amendment is awaiting ratification by the states.

Will Governor Wilson urge its ratification? There are few questions which furnish a better test of a man's sympathies. As a rule only the tax dodgers with big incomes are violently opposed to an income tax.

Where does Governor Wilson stand?

The House Rules

The Houston (Texas) Post, a paper which objects to the selection of the house committees by a committee on committees rather than by the speaker, criticises The Commoner for requesting democrats to write their representatives to vote for a revision of the rules. The Post says: "There is not one constituent in twenty-five thousand who knows what the rules of the house are, or what the rules of the house were when the vote was last controlled by democrats. Is not The Commoner's suggestion one which asks a democrat who knows nothing about parliamentary procedure to direct the course of one who does know?"

The Post has a poor opinion of the intelligence of the masses of the American people. But even though there is not one person in twenty-five thousand who knows what the rules of the last democratic house were, there are a sufficient number of persons who know what the democratic contention has been during, say, the past twelve months. These people have been told by democratic congressmen, editors and orators that the house of representatives has abdicated its constitutional power by surrender of house authority to one man called the speaker. They have seen democratic members making impassioned speeches, pleading with republicans to help them take from the speaker the authority to appoint house committees and vest that authority in the hands of a committee chosen by the house itself. These people know that if this was good doctrine when the republicans were in power in the house, it will be good doctrine when the democrats go into power in the house. It will require even more than the genius of the editor of the Houston Post to provide a satisfactory explanation to these people if the democrats insist upon vesting in a democratic speaker the power which they have decried in a republican speaker.

The Post cites the fact that Mr. Bryan was a member of the house in the Fifty-second congress; that he was appointed by Speaker Crisp as a member of the ways and means committee. It mentions a number of distinguished democrats who were members of that committee, and asks: "Could a log-rolling committee of the Fifty-second congress have improved upon that committee, giving due consideration to the experience and ability of members?"

Unquestionably the gentlemen named by the Post were faithful, capable committeemen. It may be true that a committee on committees would not even do so well as did Speaker Crisp, and it may be true that in Speaker Cannon's opinion a committee on committees could not do as well as Speaker Cannon has done in the personnel of house committees. But the fact remains that since the day of Crisp and in the days of Cannon democrats have persistently demanded the destruction of one-man power in the house through the appointment of committees by the house itself. Demanding that reform under a republican speaker, they must put it in force under a democratic speaker if they would have the people believe in their sincerity.

The Post says: "What will the speakership amount to if its duties be confined merely to the parliamentary task of presiding? Why would so experienced a man as Champ Clark be desirable in the speakership if the house is to deny itself the benefit of his experience and his knowledge of the qualifications of the members? A new member might as well hold the job, for he will have a parliamentary clerk to smooth out parliamentary tangles for him."

The speaker will be the presiding officer of a house of representatives that is true to its name, and that is an honor of which any American might be proud. Champ Clark's large experience and his sturdy patriotism will be of far greater service to the house and to the country when given by one whose influence does not depend upon despotic authority but rather upon the good opinion his fellow-members have of him. As usual, the Post has the cart before the horse. The question is not "What will the

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